

# Army Well-Being



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U.S.ARMY

**Taking Care of the Army's People**



# Army Well-Being

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## On The Cover



HANAU, Germany – Michelle Terry and Command Sgt. Maj. Jose A. Fontanez sing the "Army Song" during the Army's 232nd birthday celebration.

Karl Weisel

## Pay and Compensation

### Army launches benefits Web site

#### Army News Service

The Soldiers' Benefit Services Web site is now the Army's official one-stop resource for all benefits information.

Located at <http://myarmybenefits.us.army.mil>, the Web site contains the most current benefit information for active-duty and reserve-component Soldiers, retirees and Family members.

Active-duty Soldiers – to include Reservists and National Guard members serving on active duty – also have access to calculators that figure survivor, disability and retirement benefits. Users must have their Army Knowledge Online password to access current Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System data.

"We've realized that Soldiers do not really understand the benefits available to them," said Frank Emery, SBS program manager, Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff, G-1.

"Previously Soldiers had to go to separate Web sites to gather information on their benefits. We've consolidated it all in one place, so now Soldiers and Families can get the best information – easier and faster."

The site features more than 150 fact sheets – in both English and Spanish – grouped by Army component, life event, index and state/territory. Subjects include pay, education, Family services, health care, life insurance, transition and retirement, Soldier services and social security.

Grouping information by state and territory helps users quickly find local information and sources, Emery said. A reserve-component Soldier in Alabama, for example, can click on that state to learn local tax information and get links to the closest installations.

The retirement calculator is so "simple," Emery said, that every Soldier considering their retirement options should use it to plan ahead.

Numbers are already figured for Soldiers eligible for retirement. Soldiers planning before becoming eligible need only to key in what date they'd like to retire and the rank they expect to hold at the time.

Emery shared the calculator with an NCO considering retirement.

"This NCO was ready to retire, and his wife was ready, even though he was on the promotion list. But when I showed him how to use this tool and he entered a future retirement date with the higher rank, there was such a significant difference that he and his wife changed their minds," he said.

The site will also help Casualty Assistance Officers provide surviving Family members a clear, accurate report of benefits, he added.

In 2004, Congress mandated that the Army evaluate the benefits process and improve benefits understanding and awareness. After studying Soldiers' and Families' overall awareness regarding benefits, the Army created the SBS Web site prototype, approved last year by the Deputy Chief of Staff, G-1.

**MyArmyBenefits**

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**Welcome to MyArmyBenefits**

This is your official Army benefits resource for the Regular Army, Army National Guard, Army Reserve, Family Members and Retirees. MyArmyBenefits is your one-stop shop for the latest, most-up-to-date benefits information.

Browse through benefits and entitlements including those provided by the states and territories. Discover your eligibility, research the details of your benefits and find locations where benefits services are provided. If you still have questions, please contact us.

Active duty AKO account holders who log into the MyBenefits section can produce personalized reports that use their DEERS data to calculate survivor, education and retirement benefits, annuities and lump-sum payments. Add investments, insurance and SGLI or use the "what if" capability to see the impacts of marriage, having children or retiring at a projected date and rank to complete your financial picture.

New features serving the Army Wounded Warrior (AW2) Program and Casualty and Survivor Assistance will be available soon.

**Recent Benefit News**

- 10/15/2007 [Spouses Prepare to Reunite with their Soldiers](#)  
FORT HOOD, Texas - The 1st Cavalry Division's 3rd "Grey Wolf" Brigade Combat Team rear detachment held a Reunion Workshop Oct. 9 at the Oleta Culp Hobby Soldier and Family Readiness Center to prepare the unit's spouses for what to expect when their Soldier returns here from a 15-month deployment to Iraq in the next few months.
- 10/15/2007 [Army to Accelerate Leader Development](#)  
WASHINGTON (Army News Service, Oct. 11, 2007) - The U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command recently announced a plan to accelerate leader development at all levels and Wednesday a panel at the Association of the U.S. Army's annual meeting outlined more of the specifics.
- 10/15/2007 [Children of Deployed Parents Need Special Care](#)  
WASHINGTON (Army News Service, Oct. 10, 2007) - The nearly-two million military children in America were a special focus of Tuesday's Family Forum at the Association of the United States Army Annual Meeting.
- 10/11/2007 [Army Focuses on Soldiers' Families at AUSA Annual Meeting](#)  
Oct. 08, 2007 -- Secretary of the Army Mr. Pete Geren and Army Chief of Staff Gen. George Casey pl. Army Families

**Did You Know?**

We want your input! Click [here](#) to take our survey and tell us what you think about the MyArmyBenefits website. The survey will only take about 5 to 10 minutes.

**Recent Benefit Updates**

Publicly accessible Survivor Benefit Plan and Retirement Pay Calculator links now available. (10/17/2007)

Army Retirement Services Program information now available on MyArmyBenefits (9/5/2007)

# Warrior Transition Units at center of Army Medical Action Plan

By Gary Sheftick and Franz Holzer  
*Army News Service*

The Army is establishing 32 “Warrior Transition Units” at major installations across the force to streamline care for wounded Soldiers.

The new units are the centerpiece of the Army Medical Action Plan headed up by Brig. Gen. Mike Tucker. His AMAP team went to work in June and identified about 150 items in the system that needed improving, he said during a panel presentation today at the annual meeting of the Association of the U.S. Army.

Better housing for wounded Soldiers was one of the improvements. The Army has allocated \$173.5 million in Operations and Maintenance funding and another \$1.2 billion in Military Construction funds for Warrior Transition Unit facilities and projects, said Maj. Gen. John MacDonald of the Installation Management Command.

“The Army is putting its money where its mouth is,” MacDonald said. “... So that we have close to the hospitals a set of barracks that is accessible.”

The new Warrior Transition Units will do much more than replace Medical Hold Companies, said the Army’s acting Surgeon General, Maj. Gen. Gale S. Pollock. She said the

units will combine what used to be separate structures for the active and reserve components and bring a new level of care to all patients.

Prior to the creation of the WTUs, most active-component Soldiers requiring complex treatment remained assigned to their parent units or to a rear detachment. Some were assigned or attached to Medical Hold Companies overseen by the Army Medical Command. Reserve Component Soldiers were managed differently, attached to Medical Hold-Over Companies overseen by the Army Installation Management Command.

The Army Medical Command expects to staff WTUs with 2,419 cadre by Jan. 1, the date set for the new units to become fully operationally. The staffing will ultimately include 743 active-component Soldiers, 381 National Guard Soldiers, 381 Army Reserve Soldiers, and 914 Army Civilians, who are to support an estimated population of 10,000 Warriors in Transition.

A “Triad of Support” is what Medical Command calls a key element of the WTU cadre. The triad consists of a Primary Care Manager, who is a physician; a Nurse Case Manager, who is a registered nurse; and a squad leader, usually at the rank of staff sergeant.

There will be a squad leader for every 12

patients, said Col. Terry McKenrick, WTU brigade commander. He said in the past, many Medical Hold companies had a staff sergeant who administered to about 50 patients, and some of these did it on a part-time basis when not serving as an x-ray technician or other staff member.

A typical WTU company will have a commander, executive officer, first sergeant, six platoon sergeants and 18 squad leaders, McKenrick said.

The squad leader will meet a patient and his family at the airport, Tucker said. Then they will be escorted to the Soldier and Family Assistance Center for in-processing.

The SFAC is a “one-stop” shop, MacDonald said. “We can bring the lawyer to [wounded warriors]. We can bring the chaplain to them... so that they won’t have to run all over post.”

SFACs also help with documents, payments, access cards, benefit applications, and services coordination.

In addition to those at WTUs, “Virtual SFACs” are being established online.

“Soldiers can now log onto AKO and see their own case file ... and track their care,” Tucker said, explaining that the joint application tracking is available under “My PEB” as part of Army Knowledge Online.

As Soldiers go through the Physical Evaluation Board process, they will have access to Staff Judge Advocate officers, Tucker said. Already, 18 SJA officers have been activated for the WTUs.

“When we talk about ‘holistic’ care,” said Dr. (Col.) Elspeth Ritchie, Behavioral Health consultant to the Army Surgeon General, “we talk about the whole person. Holistic care, as the Army doctor describes, is about not only the medical aspects of healing, but the psychological, social, and cognitive aspects in conjunction with the Soldier’s career goals and aspirations.”

“It’s about healing the entire Soldier,” Tucker said. He said whatever makes a Soldier feel better and heal faster will be considered under the program. For instance, he said that allowing WTU Soldiers to wear the patches and insignia of their original units will make some in the program feel better, and that’s been authorized.

The WTU mission is to facilitate the healing and rehabilitation of Soldiers, return them to duty when possible, or to prepare them for a successful life as a veteran in their community.

“We want them to think about life after healing,” Tucker said.



Gary Sheftick

Maj. Dan Ruecking of the Army Medical Action Plan shows Capt. Steve Wang and others the “Warrior in Transition” poster unveiled at AUSA. The poster features Sgt. Maj. Brent Jurgensen who was wounded twice in Iraq and remains on active duty.



# Army Secretary visits families, privatized homes at Fort Belvoir

By Melina Rodriguez  
Army News Service

Secretary of the Army Pete Geren visited Fort Belvoir in early October to tour homes and talk with Army Families about the privatized housing initiative.

Geren asked George Washington Village residents how they felt about their new homes as he toured bedrooms, living rooms and kitchens.

"In order to have a healthy Army, we've got to have healthy Soldiers and we have to have a healthy Army Family, as well," Geren said. "If you ask a Soldier, ask anyone, about what goes into their thinking about what makes a good quality of life ... it would be housing, the home they live in, the neighborhood they live in. It's no different if you're a Soldier, a spouse or if you're a private citizen."

In December 2003, the Residential Communities Initiative's initial development began at Fort Belvoir as existing homes on post were turned over to a private housing-development company.

That company, Clark Pinnacle Family Communities LLC, which is a partnership between Clark Realty and Pinnacle, will eventually demolish and replace 1,630 homes and renovate 170 homes. When construction is complete, Clark Pinnacle will manage 2,070 Fort Belvoir homes.

So far, 36 military installations have transferred to privatized housing, with 78,000 homes under private management. RCI projects have built 11,000 new homes and renovated 10,000 homes with a goal of eventually managing nearly 90,000 homes, Geren said.

The Army has spent more than \$1 billion on the initiative.

"Through this RCI initiative, we've been helping to leverage government assets, \$1 billion worth of government assets, and invest \$10 billion in quality of life for our Soldiers and our Families," he said.



Marny Malin

Annika Valliel and her sister, Naomi, talk with Secretary of the Army Pete Geren in their home as Geren visited Fort Belvoir's George Washington Village.

Sgt. 1st Class Mark and Coretta Wiggins attended the event and discussed their home in Lewis Village, where they've lived for more than a year.

They have a detached three-bedroom home with a two-car garage.

"This is more of a community, not Army housing," said Coretta Wiggins, who also grew up as an Army child. "You can see the difference."

"As long as my Family is happy, it makes it easier for me to go to work," said Mark Wiggins, a chaplain's assistant for the Military Intelligence Readiness Command, Army Reserve.

Sgt. Tony and Robyn Persina came to Belvoir on a compassionate reassignment for one of their

two children. They have lived in Herryford Village for two years in an Americans with Disabilities Act home. The single-level home has three bedrooms, with oversized doors and hallways.

"Your house isn't just a house, it's a home," said Tony Persina. "It's a lot more comfortable; our Families visit all the time."

Five percent of the new homes at Belvoir are ADA approved.

The secretary went on to discuss upcoming initiatives and the recently approved \$100 million in funding for more than 50 existing Morale Welfare and Recreation programs and services affected by the Army's current deployment cycles.

"RCI, and more importantly the privatized housing initiative,

where you're standing now, and the houses around you are what right looks like and a very important aspect of our military to continue to improve the quality of life for Soldiers and Families," said Installation Commander Col. Brian Lauritzen. "But, it is one of many initiatives."

Fort Belvoir MWR will receive \$135,000 of the recently approved funding for two new full-time positions at Army Community Service.

Over the next five years, more funds will be designated for Family and Soldier support programs and services. RCI will soon complete it's 1,000th home on Fort Belvoir.

**Editor's note:** Rodriguez writes for the Belvoir Eagle.

# Children of deployed parents need special care

By Elizabeth M. Lorge  
*Army News Service*

The nearly-two million military children in America were a special focus of a Family Forum at the Association of the United States Army Annual Meeting, conducted in Washington in early October.

According to Army and advocacy experts, they need special attention and understanding during this time of repeated deployments and persistent conflict.

"The only way we've been able to make it as an institution through these last very challenging six years is because of the commitment of Army Families to each other. Spouses helping spouses. Kids helping kids," said Secretary of the Army Pete Geren, who said a few words during the program. "But we are in uncharted waters when you think about it: six years of deployment. This places demands on our Families that really were not contemplated over the previous 25-30 years."

Patty Shinseki, wife of Gen. (Ret.) Eric Shinseki, former Army chief of staff, serves on the Military Child Coalition Board of Directors and calls this the "new normal." She said military children are brave, proud, strong and patriotic, but that the cycle of deployments, injury and death is traumatic for children and that their caregivers must be aware they express their emotions and grief differently.

According to Vicki Johnson, a social worker and an advice columnist in the "Fort Campbell Courier," parents should expect crying, acting out, depression and isolation in children. Toddlers and young children may refuse to sleep alone, while teenagers may engage in drug and alcohol abuse and other risky behaviors.

The top five problems she sees are sleeping and eating difficulties, worry and anxiety, concern for their caregiver at home and worry that the deployed parent will be killed or injured.

Johnson said discussion groups that allow children to vent and talk are very helpful, as are education on stress and coping mechanisms and conflict-resolution skills. She also suggested getting children involved in drama, arts and crafts and other activities.

One successful program the Army is considering standardizing was started by Madigan Army Medical Center in Fort Lewis, Wash. According to Dr. David Callies, the program's founder and director, Army experts train local school counselors, educators and even students to help military children from kinder-



Elizabeth M. Lorge

Patty Shinseki, wife of Gen. (Ret.) Eric Shinseki, former Army chief of staff, speaks about the welfare of military children during the second Family Forum at the Association of the United States Army Annual Meeting Oct. 9.

garten through high school deal with deployments.

They help children of deployed parents identify and cope with their feelings and build

a problem-solving team. They find things the children can do well, and things they can do to feel better.

Callies reported that the most challenging times of the day for children with deployed parents usually are bedtime, during recess and right after school because they are getting the most information from their peers at these times.

Shinseki also pointed out that children who don't have easy access to a large installation with all its accompanying support networks are especially vulnerable to emotional wounds. This is increasingly common in the war on terrorism with the important role played by the National Guard and reserve, and the many active-duty Families who leave installations to stay with relatives during deployments.

"By caring for our children, we take care of their parents, who receive assurances that their children are happy, healthy and well-cared for," she said. "This, in turn, allows service-members to focus on and carry out their difficult missions with precision and without distraction."

## AAFES to giveaway deluxe Disney vacation

DALLAS – The Army and Air Force Exchange Service is partnering with Disney and watch maker Seiko Instruments to offer military Families an opportunity to experience the magic of a Disney vacation with an exclusive, military-only sweepstakes.

The winner of the "Disney Sweepstakes" will receive a vacation for four, including five-day-four-night deluxe hotel accommodations, airfare from any city in the world and a four-day pass to a Disney World amusement park, all with an estimated value of \$10,000.

"This family-friendly giveaway is sure to ignite the imaginations of holiday shoppers who will be coming to the BX/PX over the next few months," said AAFES's Chief of Communication Lt.

Col. Dean Thurmond. "Opportunities like this sweepstakes reaffirm AAFES', and its vendor partners', commitment to military Families."

Now through Dec. 24, exchange shoppers can enter to win the "Disney Sweepstakes" at exchange locations worldwide. No purchase is necessary to enter and entrants do not have to be present to win. The only requirement to enter is a military identification card authorizing contestants to shop at AAFES (see entry forms for complete details).

The "Disney Sweepstakes" drawing will take place in February 2008. AAFES will award prizes within 30 days of the drawing.

– *Army and Air Force Exchange Service*



# AUSA meeting opens with pledge to Army Families

By Beth Reece

*Army News Service*

The annual convention of the Association of the United States Army kicked off Oct. 8 with emphasis on America's Army as "The Strength of the Nation" and promises by leadership to do Army Families right.

Secretary of the Army Pete M. Geren said the 150 thousand Soldiers serving on the frontlines in Iraq and Afghanistan have urgent needs and expect urgent responses by Army leadership to get them what they need, when they need it.

"If we are complacent, if we ignore the lessons learned and warning signs of six years of war, the seams that are exposed in the crucible of combat, in the field or on the homefront, our Army Soldiers and Families will wear down. We will not let that happen."

The Soldier of 2007 does not look like the Soldier of 2000. He or she is trained different, equipped different and led different, Geren said, stressing that Families have also changed.

"Family support in 2007 cannot look like it did in the year 2000. Not if our Army is going to remain ready, not if our Army is to remain healthy, not if we're going to fulfill our obligations to Soldiers and Families."

In recognition of the commitment and increasing sacrifices made by Army Families, Geren pledged to give the Army's 500 thousand spouses and 700 thousand children a quality of life that matches their quality of service.

Along with Chief of Staff Gen. George W. Casey Jr. and Sergeant Major of the Army Kenneth O. Preston, Geren said Army leadership is committed to improving Family readiness by standardizing and funding existing Family programs and services, increasing accessibility and quality of health care, expanding education and employment opportunities, and



Beth Reece

The annual convention of the Association of the United States Army kicked off Oct. 8 with emphasis on America's Army as "The Strength of the Nation" and promises by leadership to do Army Families right.

improving housing.

More than 20 thousand homes have been newly built or renovated through the Army's Residential Communities Initiative since 2001. "By 2010, 90 percent of all on-post homes will have been transferred to a private partner for new construction and renovation. That partnership will change Army housing into Army homes," Geren said. "We project that by 2013, our Soldiers and Families living on post will be out of housing and living in high-quality homes in vibrant, private communities."

The Army committed \$100 million to Army family programs last summer, and plans to add another \$1.4 billion from supplemental funding for the war on terror over the next year.

"For six years we've asked much of Army Families. In this era of persistent conflict we will ask more, and we must do more," he said.

Expecting participants to spend the next three days hearing about training, transformation and modernization, Geren took the chance

to boast about the heroism of Soldiers and Families – something the secretary said often goes unlooked by national media. Two months after Sgt. 1st Class Paul R. Smith was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor in the spring of 2005 for his actions in Iraq, media had mentioned the Soldier just 90 times, Geren said.

"The alleged prisoner abuse at Guantanamo Bay had drawn 4,000 mentions, and the court martial of Abu Ghraib guard Lynndie England had drawn over five thousand mentions," Geren said. "Lynndie England is a household name in America, but Paul R. Smith is known to too few."

Geren also cited Pvt. Stephen C. Sanford of Co. C, 2nd Bn., 1st Inf. Rgt., who braved intense enemy fire while helping evacuate casualties from a home in Mosul Nov. 19, 2005. When the last evacuee was shot in the neck while leaving the house, Sanford rushed to the Soldier's side to perform CPR. Sanford was shot in the back twice while aiding the Soldier, but continued to return

fire until incapacitated by his own loss of blood.

"Pvt. Sanford put the mission first. Pvt. Sanford never accepted defeat. Pvt. Sanford never quit. Pvt. Sanford never left a fallen comrade," Geren said. "The service of our Soldiers tells the story of our Army, and their service tells what kind of Army we are."

AUSA brings Soldiers together at a crucial time in the nation's history and Army's life, he said.

"Yesterday, Oct. 7, we began the seventh year of combat operations in Iraq. This is the third largest war in the history of our nation behind the Revolutionary War and Vietnam. It is the only conflict we've fought since the Revolutionary War with an all-volunteer force," he said.

Before Geren's keynote address, Soldiers of the the 3rd U.S. Infantry (The Old Guard) and the U.S. Army Band performed skits that brought to life 232 years of Army history.

This year's meeting included more than 500 industry and military exhibits, in addition to professional development forums.

# Army to expand Basic Combat Training to 10 weeks

By John Harlow  
*Army News Service*

FORT MONROE, Va. – In early November, Basic Combat Training will expand from nine to 10 weeks at all five Army BCT sites: Fort Jackson, S.C., Fort Sill, Okla., Fort Leonard Wood, Mo., Fort Knox, Ky., and Fort Benning, Ga.

“We’re going to do 10 weeks of basic training, starting on Nov. 2,” said Gen. William S. Wallace, the commanding general of the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command. “It will be a pilot during this fiscal year. We’re going to do it for the first third of the year. The last 10-week course will be complete somewhere around the twenty-first of March, and then we’ll go back to our normal

nine-week basic training for the rest of the fiscal year.”

A reason for conducting a pilot program is to see what effect expanding BCT by a week has on Advanced Individual Training, known as AIT.

“We’re doing it as a pilot to make sure we understand the second and third-order of effects of doing 10 weeks of basic training,” Wallace said. “We anticipate a surge in our training population during the second half of the fiscal year which we couldn’t get around in terms of scheduling.”

The expansion doesn’t add more tasks to be trained during BCT.

“We are not going to add tasks and I have been very specific – we are not going to add any tasks,” Wallace said. “What we’re going to add is time, and give that

time to the drill sergeant so that he can ensure that the individuals have mastered those tasks that they need to master, before they go on to AIT. That is the sole purpose.”

As in all of BCT, drill sergeants will play a key role in the tenth week.

“We want to make sure we have enough time to review and retrain the things that are required of the Soldiers by the units in the field,” said TRADOC Command Sgt. Maj. John Sparks.

“For instance, a Soldier might learn one of the warrior tasks and battle drills in week two or three. By extending BCT, it gives us the opportunity to review those type of skills and retrain and retest them to ensure that the Soldier ... has the kinds of skills necessary to assimilate into his unit.”

In the nine-week BCT the Army currently conducts, Soldiers learn 40 warrior tasks and go through 11 battle drills. With a 10-week BCT, Soldiers will be able to refresh on what they learned and also get an extra week of physical fitness training.

“We do need to add a little bit of extra time and give it to the drill sergeant,” Wallace said. “In my judgment, it will provide to the AIT commander a better physically fit, more mature, more disciplined Soldier who understands the tasks to master better than he does right now.”

**Editor’s note:** Harlow writes for the TRADOC News Service.

# Army changing selection, assignment policy for top NCOs

By Master Sgt. Shaun Herron  
*Army News Service*

Sgt. Maj. of the Army Kenneth O. Preston unveiled the newest modernization effort for the U.S. Army enlisted force during a meeting with senior non-commissioned officers today at the Association of the United States Army annual meeting and exposition.

It was not a weapon system, or a new piece of gear for Soldiers, but rather a management system designed to provide a process that manages the Army’s most senior-level non-commissioned officers, command sergeants major and sergeants major.

“By changing ... we enhance our capability of getting the right leader with the right experience and skill sets, into the right position at the right time,” Preston said during an earlier interview.

The new policy will change the management system for senior NCOs from one designed for a peace-time Army, Preston said, “to a system that selects, trains and promotes Soldiers ready to meet the full range of threats and challenges in the 21st Century.”

The benefits to this modernization will be seen in a variety of ways, he said.

“It will be an improvement overall, from the way we select our command sergeants



Beth Reece

Sgt. Maj. of the Army Kenneth O. Preston announces the new senior NCO management policy Oct. 9 at the annual meeting of the Association of the U.S. Army.

major and sergeants major, to the way we train them to how we select and synchronize our battalion and brigade command teams.

“The Army, and the nation will benefit from this change by having NCOs with

greater leadership experience in a variety of operational environments,” Preston said, “while Soldiers – the centerpiece of our Army – will benefit from the mentorship and leadership of these multi-skilled, adaptive and successful leaders.”

Command sergeants major and sergeants major will benefit from greater predictability in upward mobility and career progression, he said, and greater family stability.

“This new system will provide greater certainty for those selected for promotion and attendance to the U.S. Sergeants Major Academy, that they know they will be promoted, frocked if necessary, to sergeant major upon completion of the course, beginning with the graduation of those in ‘Class 60’ (set to graduate the nine-month course at Fort Bliss in the summer of 2010) and beyond,” Preston said.

Additionally, this policy change is designed to allow the creation of command teams that train together before taking command of a battalion or brigade combat team.

“Perhaps the greatest impact to the Army will be in our ability to align command sergeant major selection and appointment with the selection of battalion and brigade commanders,” Preston said. “Achieving this al-

See Top NCOs on Page 8



# Army building its civilian bench for mobility

By J.D. Leipold  
*Army News Service*

A new DoD directive will emphasize mobility for civilian employees and training an expeditionary workforce ready to deploy to hot spots like Iraq and Afghanistan.

Patricia S. Bradshaw, deputy undersecretary of Defense for Civilian Personnel Policy, discussed the draft directive and civilian leadership development during a seminar in mid October.

The new DoD directive, which is presently awaiting signature, defines the competencies expected of senior leaders, and outlines opportunities for movement so that mobility becomes the norm, not the exception, she said.

### Expeditionary workforce

"We've needed to start building the right kind of competencies to create a civilian workforce that is as expeditionary as our military members," Bradshaw said.

Future DoD Senior Executive Service members will be required to make commitments to life-long learning and have a portfolio of diversified working experiences outside their organizations, she said. The days of being "home-grown" are gone because leaders today need to be more rounded and well-versed in the global international environment.

The future calls for multi-skilled leaders who are strategic and creative thinkers, she said. Future training must build leaders and teams who are effective in managing, leading and changing large organizations, and who understand cultural context and how to work effectively across that culture.

### SES demographics

Bradshaw discussed the effect SES demographics will have on future leadership within the Army and throughout DoD.

"The average age of SESers in DoD is 54 and a half with 23 years of service," she said. "Right now 30 percent are eligible to retire and by 2010 about 50 percent of them will be eligible to retire."

"Looking out across the rest of the department today, 42 percent of our workforce is eligible to retire and by 2010, some 70 percent will be eligible, so there's a real sense of urgency for us to get along with business, but as we do that, we can't do it the way we've always done it.

"Today, the environment, the political and social landscapes have changed," she said. "A number of world events have come together to redefine how we accomplish our mission in DoD, whether it's 9/11, hurricane Katrina,

continuing world disasters – we as DoD are being called upon to perform missions in ways we have never performed before."

### Interagency experience important

Bradshaw said that while the United States has aligned its forces and changed the military model, the civilian model hadn't kept pace because previous to the war on terror, when budget cuts were made, civilian training and education budgets were the first to be hacked.

The attitude has changed since the 1990s she said, adding that when she looks across DoD today she sees a commitment made with a demonstration of dollars behind it.

She said a joint integrated workforce that practices mobility and interoperability is needed, not just across another part of the Army or even across DoD, but across all interagency partners and the states, local and international governments.

### Changing the culture

Jeannie A. Davis, Army G-1 for Civilian Personnel, addressed specific moves the Army is making to develop its SES leaders. The Army intern and fellows programs are key ways in which the Army will build its bench of SES leaders.

"The intern program works," she said. "We've had it for many years and it's gone through peaks and valleys. In 1988 we had 3,800 interns and last year we had 1,586 and 837 new hires. We're also continuing to build that number and we anticipate that number going up to about 2,500 per year by 2013."

The fellows program, established by the Army Materiel Command, is expected to begin Armywide next summer with about 120 fellows, doubling to 250 by 2009, Davis said.

"We're going to make sure these fellows get DoD and joint assignments because these are really important things for young folks to

learn as they come in," she said. About 20 percent of the Army's fellows come from the top 361 colleges and universities in the U.S., and have grade point averages of 3.63.

### Centrally-managed training program

The Army is also looking at centrally managed education and career management for senior Civilians. A tiger team has been implemented to come up with a concept plan over the next several months.

"We're looking at how we take the person at Camp Swampy and get them to be able and interested in being that SESer of the future," she said. "The tiger team will put together some specifics in the broad career groups so that people have more opportunities to move into comparable work or different work and in the process they will be multi-skilled and better able to move into SES positions in the future."

Volney Warner, director of the Army Civilian Development Office, said the goal is to provide every Army Civilian a path, or alternative paths, where employees can see and apply their own energies toward a self-development process. The path is one that allows them to develop themselves with institutional support for higher levels of responsibility, authority and great contributions to the Army.

"The proof in the pudding for this is leadership, time, attention and oversight," he said. "All of the Training and Doctrine Command schools that have available educational opportunities are now in the process where those empty seats are identified early, transmitted and made transparent for whoever the right person is."

Volney said every Army civilian has two fundamental responsibilities – mission accomplishment; and provide for the future of the institution.

## Top NCOs

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lows the Army to create command teams that can attend the Pre-Command Course at Fort Leavenworth together, building a cohesive command team for our brigade combat teams and our battalions.

Execution of this new policy will be most readily evident with the next sergeant major selection list in Fiscal Year 08, Preston said. He said that list, and subsequent lists, will not include the selection of

junior, non-promotion-eligible master sergeants for early attendance to the Sergeants Major Academy as alternates. The FY07 board was the last board with a mission to select master sergeants as alternates for school, he said.

"That transition will further enhance our ability to provide the Army with NCOs in the most senior leadership ranks of the NCO Corps – multi-skilled leaders who are adaptive, confident and competent," Preston said.



## Casey: 'Strong Families the key to a strong force'

By Elizabeth M. Lorge  
*Army News Service*

The Army is committed to building and maintaining strong Families, said Army Chief of Staff Gen. George W. Casey, Jr. Oct. 8 during the first Family Forum of the Association of the United States Army Annual Meeting.

Casey discussed the new Army Family Covenant, unveiled during AUSA's opening ceremony, and the importance of Families in building and maintaining the force.

"I saw what we were asking of our Soldiers and our Families over the last several years," he said. "It struck me that the best wasn't good enough. We have not, until this point, treated Families as the readiness issue that they are."

"We recognize what it takes to be an Army Family, and that our Soldiers draw great strength from their Families. The welfare of Army Families is increasingly important to all of us," he said, adding that the Army was committed to building a partnership with Families.

The Army Family Covenant says that Soldiers' strength comes from their Families. It pledges to provide for and support those Families, increase the accessibility and quality of healthcare, improve Soldier and Family housing and standardize and fund Family programs and services.

The covenant also says the Army will ensure excellence in schools, youth services and



U.S. Army

Gen. George W. Casey, Jr. is committed to improving quality of life for Soldiers and their Families.

childcare, and expand education and employment opportunities for Family members.

All of these are important issues for Family members, said Sheila Casey, who's travelled around the world with the general and spoken to hundreds of Family members and Family readiness leaders about what they need and are experiencing.

"Spouses are definitely feeling the strain and effects of six years of war. They're stressed and they're stretched but they still are ama-

zingly resilient," she said.

Casey said that the improvements will take time, but that the Army plans to continue the increased Family support after operations end in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Of special concern are National Guard and Army Reserve Families who are geographically disparate and don't have the support and benefit access available on an installation.

"Every Family in America ought to have the same level of support that you would have if you lived near an installation," said Lt. Gen. Jack C. Stultz, Jr., chief of the Army Reserve. "We've got to do this. We've got to figure out a way to make sure our Families are taken care of because I need my Soldiers focused on their mission, not worried about their Families. When they lose focus, they may cost someone their lives."

One way to reach far-flung Families is via the online community. Stultz credits his wife, Lauralyn Stultz, as the force behind the 'virtual-installations' idea, online repositories of information on benefits, support groups and other information.

The idea is largely conceptual, but the Reserve and National Guard have signed memorandums of agreement with installations, the Department of Veterans Affairs, veterans-service organizations and other groups to provide resources for Soldiers and their Families and are working to garner more support.

"You lose the Family, you lose the Soldier," Sheila Casey said.

## Holiday mailing deadlines rapidly approaching for sending troop support

DALLAS – While the holidays may still seem far away, Americans hoping to show their support to deployed troops must be aware of some rapidly approaching deadlines. According to the Military Postal Service Agency, mail going parcel post must be sent by Nov. 14 while first class mail must be sent by Dec. 10 to arrive by Dec. 25.

In addition to deadlines, several other factors must be considered when sending mail downrange. For example, each country has customs regulations that apply to all incoming mail, pertaining to everything from food items to reading materials.

Furthermore, military units

may also have additional restrictions concerning incoming mail imposed by unit commanders relative to size and weight to ensure logistics support can handle the heavy mail load. Finally, all packages and mail must now be addressed to individual servicemembers as required by DoD regulations.

In order to help facilitate the mailing process and avoid obstacles that come with traditional care packages, the Army and Air Force Exchange Service created "Gifts from the Homefront," a campaign that allows anyone to make a direct and tangible contribution to military morale with a gift certificate that can be redeem-

ed for nearly anything a specific servicemember wants.

"A package from home is certainly nice, but cookies get stale and fragile electronics can break," said AAFES's Chief of Communications Lt. Col. Dean Thurmond. "A 'Gift from the Homefront' gift certificate can alleviate a great deal of burden for the post office and sender while ensuring Soldiers, Airmen, Marines and Sailors are able to get exactly what they desire or need."

AAFES currently operates 53 facilities in support of operations Iraqi and Enduring Freedom.

"Gifts from the Homefront" can be sent to deployed troops by logging on to [www.aafes.org](http://www.aafes.org) or

calling 1-877-770-4438. Gift certificates are sent to individual servicemembers (designated by the purchaser) or distributed to "any servicemember" through the Air Force Aid Society, American Red Cross, Coalition to Salute America's Heroes, Fisher House, Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society, Operation Homefront, Operation Interdependence® or USO. "Gifts From the Homefront" gift certificates can be redeemed at exchange facilities worldwide.

As of Sept. 30, approximately 92,900 "Gifts from the Homefront" gift certificates have been sent since DoD approved the exchange support campaign in March 2003.

# Grieving parents find comfort in each other

By Elizabeth M. Lorge  
Army News Service

Losing a child in war is like losing an appendage, said two military wives and mothers whose sons have made the ultimate sacrifice in Iraq during the third and final Family Forum at the Association of the United States Army Annual Meeting Oct. 10.

Retired Marine Sgt. Maj. David and Deborah Tainsh lost Sgt. Patrick Tainsh in Iraq in February 2004 when his convoy suffered an improvised-explosive device and rocket-propelled grenade attack outside the Baghdad Airport. Severely

wounded, he fired over 400 rounds with two guns and waited until the battle ended before telling his commander of his injuries and dying. He received the Silver Star for his actions. Mrs. Tainsh immortalized their story in "Heart of a Hawk," a journey of healing.

Maj. Gen. (then Col.) Mark and Carol Graham's son Kevin was an ROTC cadet who committed suicide in 2003. His older brother Jeffery, already a lieutenant, was offered a stateside assignment, but he wanted to serve his country in Iraq. He died seven months after his brother, also in February 2004.

"I can remember so clearly that morning. I'd gotten up about five a.m., only to find on the internet that two Soldiers had been killed. I asked Mark if we would know by now if it was Jeffery or not. Deep in my spirit, I had a feeling it was him, but the rational side of my brain could not even begin to think that it could be our son. It could just not be true. Not again," Graham said.

"I was well trained in deployments and support groups during my husband's career but sending a child to war is an experience that has no expression," Tainsh said. "You have to be a parent to understand because parents give life to protect that life. We never expect our babies to go out to protect us. For us and those like us, our worlds have been changed forever."

She said they have lost the future: they'll never plan their son's wedding or have grandchildren. They've also grown apart from his fiancée, who was once like a daughter to them. They don't even put a tree up at Christmas anymore.

Graham added that while their friends' children graduated, married and had children, they wondered why the world kept spinning without their sons, and they would cry in church when the prayers of others were answered.

Tainsh said the worst question she and her husband get is if they will have any other children. She doesn't understand why this matters.

She said another grieving mother tells others:

"Think of a car. The car runs great with four good tires, but if one tire blows, it's absolutely useless. The great difference is that a car tire can be replaced."

Both she and Graham have found solace in the arms of others who have suf-

fered great tragedy and, in turn, worked through their grief by helping other bereaved parents.

Graham said that she and her husband initially struggled with whether he should retire, but then realized that they may be able to help other Families.

"More Soldiers died in Iraq, others died in car accidents or by suicide and it occurred to us that maybe this was the reason we were called to continue to serve. We personally knew the pain these families were feeling and we could genuinely connect in a way we never could have before. As we tried to comfort the broken hearts of the people God put in our path, an amazing phenomenon occurred – these precious people helped us more than we helped them."

Mrs. Tainsh said she and her husband were lost for more than a year until they found Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors, a non-profit which connected them with other parents and Families.

"TAPS was the blessing that gave Dave and me what we needed and finally placed our lives on a track with a definite purpose,"

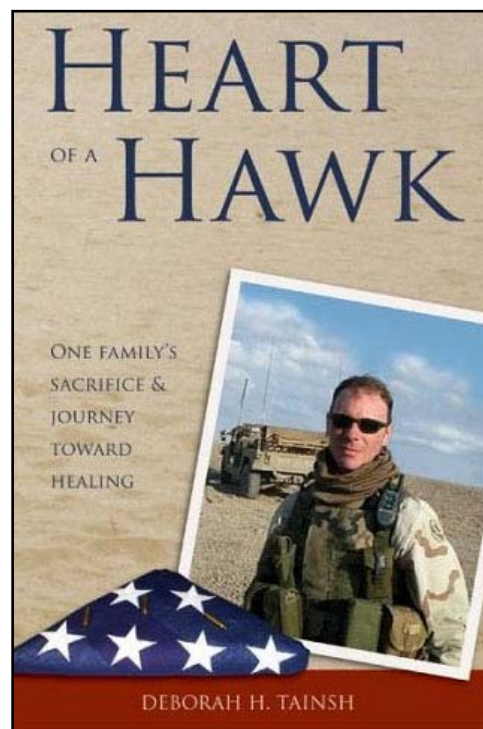
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*"People ask us all the time: how do you do it? Even after four years, many mornings I wake up thinking this is all a bad dream, but we were so blessed and so honored to have had such amazing sons and remind ourselves continually that they were a gift."*

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**– Carol Graham  
on the loss of her two sons**

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Courtesy Photo

Deborah Tainsh wrote "Heart of a Hawk" about her son's life, death in battle and their journey of healing.

Tainsh said. "We connected with parents and other family members and found our new family, where we were bonded through our grief."

Both she and her husband have trained to help other families through TAPS and all of her book's proceeds go to the organization.

"Four or five years ago if someone had told us we could survive the death of even one of our children, I would not have believed it," Graham said. "People ask us all the time: how do you do it? Even after four years, many mornings I wake up thinking this is all a bad dream, but we were so blessed and so honored to have had such amazing sons and remind ourselves continually that they were a gift. We did nothing to deserve them and so our attitude must always be one of gratitude that we even had them at all."

"It does not take away the pain, but it somehow puts light around the darkness and gives us the strength and courage to keep on living. We've learned that the more grateful our hearts are, the more we're filled with compassion for the needs of others. We're grateful to live on the best nation on this planet and be part of our wonderful Army Family," she said.